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UNCLAS OTTAWA 003134

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: U.S. VIEWS ON PROPOSED UN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

REF: SECSTATE 246829

1. ESTH Counselor made the demarche requested in reftel to Richard Ballhorn, Director General for Environment and Sustainable Development Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs, and to Nicole Ladouceur, Director General for International Affairs in the Department of the Environment. Ballhorn will attend the meeting in Sweden next week, accompanied by Ladouceur's deputy, Nancy Hamzawi.

2. Ballhorn and Ladouceur both said that Canada is generally supportive of the effort to improve global environmental governance, and in that sense, supports the French initiative for an international environmental organization. Ladouceur noted that she was in Paris last week accompanying Environment Minister Dion as he met with his French counterpart. She said Dion reiterated Canada's support for the French initiative. She told ESTH Counselor, however, that Canada is pragmatic about the effort and knows that the U.S. and other countries do not support it. Consequently, Canada is under no illusion that there will be quick consensus.

3. Ballhorn took a somewhat different approach, noting that the Swedes were not great supporters of the French proposal, preferring instead an alternative which would create an executive board for the UNEP in the hopes of infusing more focus, coordination and efficiency into the organization. He also emphasized Canada's interest in strengthening UNEP's finances to make it less dependent on voluntary contributions. Ballhorn said that Canada could live with either the French or the Swedish approach, as long as it improved global environmental governance.

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DICKSON